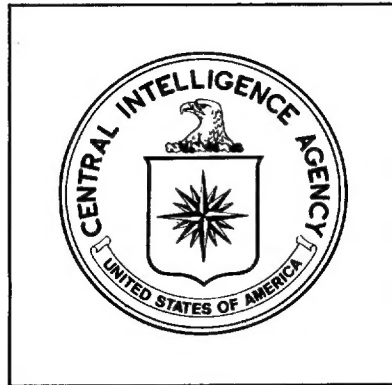


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The Draft Constitution: Publicity and Proposals

The nationwide discussion of the draft constitution has been under way for more than a month and shows no sign of having yet reached its peak. *Pravda* and the other major newspapers carry daily reports that the public is studying the new constitution and discussing its provisions at party meetings, trade union sessions, and other gatherings. Soviet domestic radio and television broadcasts are also giving the subject extensive coverage. This reinforces the impression that the primary purpose of the public discussion is not so much to explore areas where amendments might be offered as to develop a groundswell of enthusiasm for the new constitution. Nevertheless, a few interesting proposals have been made so far.

The Constitution and the Alienated Professionals

The regime's belief that it needed to stage a carefully managed campaign to sell the new constitution is easier to understand when one considers the views that

expressed in mid-May of this year. Asked for his view of the state of Soviet law and justice, he reacted with disdain: "What Soviet law? There is no legality in the Soviet Union--only arbitrary and illogical decisions based on a maze of overlapping and contradictory laws and administrative regulations." There is no justice either; judges are subject to the pressures of those who have influence or power, including, of course, party pressure, even in cases having no political significance.

specified that in his view a decent legal system must satisfy two essential conditions: it must use the jury system, and it must have truly independent judges; but the Soviet Union has neither.

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[redacted] representative of the views of a good many middle class professionals--people who are well educated and live quite well by Soviet standards. His remarks suggest that it is not just the creative intellectuals who are alienated from the Soviet regime, its ideology, and its institutions. A considerable portion of middle class professionals who are part of the economic bureaucracy may also be people who serve the regime largely for cynical reasons in return for perquisites and positions of authority.

Proposed Economic Amendments

Some professionals are taking the new constitution seriously, however, and some of their proposed amendments may be incorporated into the draft before it goes into effect. Academician A. Ishlinsky, chairman of the National Council of Scientific and Technical Societies has suggested that the new constitution specify that the realization of scientific achievements is "the direct duty of ministries, departments and economic leaders, and is insured by them in accordance with the established plans." He explained in *Sotsialisticheskaya Industriya* on June 7 that this would put more pressure on economic officials to fulfill the national economic plan for science and technology, which has fallen short of its projected goal in recent years.

Gosplan official M. Kashirina has suggested that one way to overcome the many problems hindering the process of setting up industrial production associations is to have their role in the state management system mentioned in the constitution. His article in *Pravda* on June 11 implied that this would make it easier to cut through the bureaucratic inertia, red tape, and general confusion among the people responsible for setting up associations, assigning individual enterprises to them, and drawing up the rules governing the relationship between an association and the enterprises under its aegis.

Reformist Suggestions

Two reformist economists--academicians A. Aganbegyan and T. Zaslavskaya--have been more outspoken in urging that the new constitution endorse certain economic levers and experiments which are apparently still regarded as

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controversial by Soviet conservatives. Their article in *Izvestia* on June 23 thus claimed that the sentence "interpreting which economic levers are used is still not full enough." While the new constitution states that "active use is made of financial autonomy, profit, and prime cost," Aganbegyan and Zaslavskaya contend that other economic incentives are also used--or should be used. They insist that "it is very important not to belittle their significance, and to mention here prices, credit, and the flexible use of wages--in a word--to speak in a more general and at the same time fuller sentence of economic levers and incentives and of Lenin's principle of material interest."

The two academicians also note that there are many areas where successful experiments--for example, the use of wage differentials to stimulate efficient economic management--are not applied outside the original "laboratory." They claim that this is why it is so important to "formulate and enshrine the organizational, scientific, economic, and legal bases of the experiments and to give them the force of law. At present, those who take part in experiments "lay themselves open" at their work while their legal position is most vulnerable. They can be reproached and for every mistake can be condemned for deviating from the universally accepted norms and law. Aganbegyan and Zaslavskaya argue that "by giving the force of law to independence and initiative from below, the new constitution would give new strength to experiments and to an organization of work using a wide range of economic incentives and levers."

Nationality Policy: Support for Centralizing

M. Kholov, chairman of the Presidium of the Tadzhik Republic Supreme Soviet, proposed in *Pravda* on July 5 that the second paragraph of Article 76 of the draft constitution be reworded as follows: "A Union Republic assists by every means the strengthening of the USSR, the implementation of its powers on its territory, and the implementation of the decisions of the USSR organs of state power and management." This was to replace the statement that "a Union Republic shall facilitate the implementation of the powers of the USSR in its territory and carry out the decisions of the USSR organs of state power and management." At first glance, Kholov's phrasing

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would further strengthen control from the center. It may be relevant that the Tadzhik Republic leadership, after having been under a cloud from the late 1960s to the early 1970s, has been very careful to stay in Moscow's good graces in recent years.

Armed Forces: "Broad International Cooperation" Backed

The men in the armed force have also begun to study the new constitution and discuss its implications with respect to their duty to be ready to defend the "motherland" at any time and at any cost. They, too, are said to have made "a number of specific proposals for the draft," but only one is known to have been made public. A letter from Reserve Major F. Dyachenko, published in *Krasnaya Zvezda* on June 14, proposed a brief addition to Article 28 in the section on Soviet foreign policy. Dyachenko would have that section read: "The Soviet state shall consistently pursue the Leninist policy of peace and stand for *the easing and, in the long term, the elimination of the danger of a new world war and the consolidation of the security of peoples and broad international cooperation.* (The words in italics were added by Dyachenko).

Dyachenko balanced this somewhat by noting that the people working with him at the "Kirovsky Zavod" production association consider it their duty to help strengthen the nation and promote the growth of its economic capability and its influence. Nevertheless, the net effect appears to be that the military establishment has been put on record--although by a very low-ranking and unofficial representative--as favoring a constitution that comes down hard on the side of detente.

It is impossible at this point to predict which, if any, of these proposals will be incorporated into the new constitution when it is adopted--presumably in time for the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution in early November. It is worth noting, however, that people from several different walks of life within the USSR act as if the wording of the new constitution does matter. This may be merely window-dressing meant to make the rank-and-file citizens believe that the adoption of a new constitution is an

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important event in their lives. On the other hand, it probably also reflects a conviction shared by some Soviet professionals that the only way to change the system is to begin by getting one's view legitimized by having it endorsed in the new constitution.

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Party Supervision of Production Associations: Developments Since the 25th Party Congress

The authorities in Moscow have had problems in coordinating party work at the enterprises under a production association--especially when the enterprises are located in a number of cities or in more than one oblast, kray, or republic. In these cases, it is impossible to establish a single "integrated" primary party organization at the association level. To do so would violate the administrative-territorial chain of command for civilian party organizations--the restoration of which was one of the first steps taken by the post-Khrushchev leadership. In the meantime, the situation has been further complicated by the tendency of many town or rayon party committees to lose interest in an enterprise soon after it has been incorporated into an association whose headquarters is in another district.

Not surprisingly, the authorities in Moscow have made haste slowly in arriving at a solution. The 25th Congress, held in February-March 1976, saw only a passing reference to the question, when Estonian Republic First Secretary I. G. Kebin mentioned the need to study the experience gained in creating "expanded" party committees and in setting up "councils of party secretaries" at associations so that these innovations might be reflected in the party statutes. Not until August 1976 did the authorities issue a Central Committee resolution endorsing the efforts in this area at the Gorky Automotive Factory (GAZ) Association, whose affiliates are located in the Ukraine, Moldavia, and Tadzhikistan, as well as in Gorky and other parts of the RSFSR.

A report in *Sotsialisticheskaya Industriya* on December 23 provided more details on how the people in Gorky have been coordinating party work at the association level. It said that the party members at the main plant and the subsidiaries located in the city have merged into a single primary party organization and have set up an "expanded" party committee consisting of 55 party members.

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The people on this committee focus most of their attention on complex technical and economic problems or other long-term issues. The party committee's "bureau"--consisting of 15 persons--handles "current issues," and apparently is to assume most of the leadership functions exercised by the party committees at individual enterprises.

This means that the party leadership at the association level will not be elected directly by the members of the "integrated" primary unit there, but by the members of its "enlarged" committee. Rayon or city party officials may find it easier to manipulate such elections, especially when an "enlarged" committee is heavily peopled with "foremost workers" and other "activists." On the other hand, the new arrangement will put the association's party officials--once elected--on a more even footing with the rayon or city party officials. The party leaders at the association also will be members of a "bureau"--not just a committee--and probably will have much the same authority as rayon party officials in making decisions on their unit's internal affairs.

The August resolution also approved the association's creation of a "council of party secretaries" to coordinate party work at the enterprises in Gorky with that at the affiliates elsewhere in the oblast, in other parts of the RSFSR, or in other republics. The council includes the secretaries of the party organizations at all production units and other major subdivisions, and meets once or twice a quarter. This is at least twice as often as the *aktiv* meetings at the association level, and a more regular schedule than the party secretaries from outlying districts, who have made only episodic visits to GAZ headquarters.

The GAZ "council of party secretaries" endorsed by the Central Committee in August 1976 had been set up as recently as May of that year. There is additional evidence to suggest that the authorities in Moscow, after having held off on a decision for years, began last year to move rather quickly, not only to tackle this problem in industry but also to deal with a parallel problem in agriculture. A June 1976 Central Committee resolution

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endorsed the creation of agricultural production associations. While many of these associations will be organized within the confines of a single rayon, the resolution makes it clear that some will cut across rayon, oblast, kray, and perhaps even the republic boundaries--adding to the number of associations requiring something other than an "integrated" primary party organization. The June resolution meant that the solution for coordinating party work at the more distant affiliates would have to be applicable to all parts of the country, not just the heavily industrialized regions.

The "councils of party secretaries" are merely consultative bodies, and are not authorized to handle the problems of intraparty life within the organizations located outside the district in which the association's headquarters is based. Any other arrangement would be likely to alienate a host of local party officials. The councils are not powerless, however; their "recommendations" on the activities of the managerial staff and personnel actions carry considerable weight with the directors and other administrative figures. This is because the council, working through the party committee at the main enterprise, is able to exert party pressure on the leadership of an association when the "recommendations" of the council have not been carried out.

The Soviet leaders apparently still have reservations, however, about setting up "expanded" party committees since the 25th Congress suggests that the committees are to be established, as a rule, at the association level only. There has been no discussion in the Soviet media of how these "expanded" party committees will set up permanent commissions for economic activities, organizational-party work, and ideological questions at individual enterprises. In the past, the advocates of such committees emphasized this feature as one of their major advantages.

This "advantage" may be considered a mixed blessing by the city and rayon party officials. The city and rayon party units have their own sub-committees for technical-economic matters, organizational-party work, and ideological questions. These sub-committees participate in the drafting of a long-term plan of action for the city or rayon committees, and supervise the local primary party organizations carrying out those plans. Their task

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might be made easier by the existence of a corresponding permanent commission under the "expanded" party committee at a major enterprise, but the city and rayon officials may feel that this "plus" is more than offset by the possibility that an "expanded" committee might use its permanent commissions to press for more autonomy. This may account for the top leadership's failure to push "expanded" party committees at individual enterprises with much vigor in recent years.

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